

Pragmatic Adaptation and Semantic Shifting in Translation

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Abstract: This article examines pragmatic adaptation and semantic shifts in the translation of Lee Kuan Yew's *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story (1965–2000)* into Uzbek (*Uchinchi dunyodan birinchi dunyoga: Singapur tarixi (1965–2000)*, Akademnashr, 2023). The study identifies the characteristics of translating political and historical texts, focusing on the strategies employed to preserve the author's style and ideas. Through comparative, pragmatic, and semantic analysis, the types of semantic shifts (expansion, reduction, modulation) and their impact on the Uzbek audience's perception are determined. Examples from the book's chapters illustrate how the translator adapted Lee Kuan Yew's political rhetoric and ideological concepts. While the translation successfully conveys the intended meaning, some instances of nuance loss highlight the challenges of translating ideologically charged texts. The findings underscore the significance of a pragmatic approach in translation.

Keywords: Pragmatic adaptation, semantic shift, translation, Lee Kuan Yew, political texts, Singapore, Uzbek language, ideology, cultural adaptation.

Introduction: Translation is not merely a linguistic tool, but an important arena for intercultural communication. When translating politically or historically significant texts, a literal word-for-word translation is not enough, as such texts embody the author's political views, cultural characteristics, and pragmatic intentions. Translators have the task of not only conveying the original meaning but also adapting it to the cultural and social context of the target audience. This process is called pragmatic adaptation and holds a significant place in translation theory. In this study, we analyze the processes of pragmatic adaptation and semantic shifting using the Uzbek translation of Singapore's first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's work "*From Third World to First: The Singapore Story (1965-2000)*" (Akademnashr, 2023). The purpose of the study is to identify the specific characteristics of semantic shifts (changes in meaning) and pragmatic adaptation processes that occur when translating political and historical texts. Furthermore, it examines how Lee Kuan Yew's political rhetoric and translation strategies were preserved in the Uzbek translation.

METHODS

The study is based on the following methodological approaches:

Comparative-analytical method: The original English text of the work was compared and analyzed with its Uzbek translation. This method was used to identify lexical, syntactic, and semantic differences.

Pragmatic analysis: The main sentences expressing Lee Kuan Yew's political and economic ideas were studied from a pragmatic perspective. The level of clarity and impact of the translation for the Uzbek reader was evaluated, as was its alignment with the pragmatic purpose of the text.

Semantic analysis: The semantic shifts (expansion, reduction, modulation) that occurred in the translation of idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and special terms were identified.

Literature Review: The theoretical works of translation scholars such as Salomov (2020), Catford (1965), Newmark (1988), and Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995), as well as studies on Singaporean

translation practices by researchers like Xun (2021), Li (2017), Phua (2020), and Gui (2019), served as the basis for the analysis. These sources strengthened the theoretical foundation of the research. For the analysis, 20 key quotes from 10 selected chapters of the work were compared, classified by types of semantic shifts, and evaluated for the degree of pragmatic adaptation.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed the following specific findings. Semantic shifts were observed in the following types, based on the classifications of Catford (1965) and Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995):

Expansion: Cases where additional information was added in the translation. Examples: Original: "Singapore transformed from a sleepy fishing village into a global metropolis." Translation: "Singapur tinch baliqchilar qishlog'idan global megapolisga aylandi." Shift: The word "sleepy" was expanded with "tinch" (peaceful) to clarify the metaphorical inactivity.

Original: "We faced tremendous odds with an improbable chance of survival." Translation: "Omon qolish uchun qo'limizda aqlbovar qilmas darajada kam imkoniyat bor edi." Shift: The word "improbable" was expanded with "aqlbovar qilmas darajada" (unbelievably) to enhance the dramatic effect.

Reduction: Cases where certain elements were omitted in the translation. Examples: Original: "The government enforced strict regulations to ensure public order and economic stability." Translation: "Hukumat barqarorlik uchun qattiq qoidalar joriy qildi." Shift: "Public order and economic stability" were reduced to "barqarorlik" (stability) through generalization.

Original: "They no longer harbored suspicions of 'smuggling' to Singapore...we could not be blamed." Translation: "Ular endi Singapurni kontrabandada gumon qilishmadi... bunda bizni ayblay olishmasdi." Shift: "Harbored suspicions" was reduced to "gumon qilishmadi" (did not suspect), preserving connotations while reducing detail.

Modulation: Adaptation through a change in meaning. Examples: Original: "The People's Action Party's grip on power remained firm." Translation: "Xalq harakati partiyasi o'z siyosiy hukmronligini saqlab qoldi." Shift: The metaphor "grip on power" was replaced with "siyosiy hukmronlik" (political dominance), shifting from a metaphorical to a direct meaning.

Original: "The Singapore government adopted a carrot-and-stick approach to policymaking." Translation: "Singapur hukumati rag'bat va jazoga asoslangan yondashuvni qo'lladi." Shift: The metaphor "carrot-and-stick" was modulated to "rag'bat va jazo" (reward

and punishment) for cultural adaptation.

The following results were observed in the examples of pragmatic adaptation:

In the chapter "Going it Alone": The original title was adapted to "Yolg'iz bosib o'tilgan yo'l" (The Path Traveled Alone); emotional enhancement was found in 3 of 5 sentences (e.g., the addition of "umid berdi" - gave hope).

In the chapter "Indonesia From Foe to Friend": Diplomatic speech was simplified; connotations were preserved in 2 of 4 sentences, but softened in 1 (the element of accusation).

In the chapter "Britain Pulls Out": Political terms (e.g., "coup" – "davlat to'ntarishi") were directly preserved; the dramatic tone was enhanced in 4 of 6 sentences.

In the corruption chapter: "Stamp out corruption" was expanded to "tag-tomiri bilan yo'q qilish" (to eradicate from the root); modality (obligation) was preserved in 5 of 7 sentences.

Drawbacks and Limitations: In some cases, semantic shifting led to a loss of clarity. For example, when "controlled leadership" was softened to "strategik boshqaruv" (strategic governance), the element of "control" was lost, which might lead the Uzbek reader to a superficial understanding of the authoritarian aspect of the Singaporean model. Similarly, in the sentence "We had to show that our government was not like others in the region," reducing "region" diminished the strong contrast of regional comparison.

DISCUSSION

The results show that pragmatic adaptation ensures the contextual, cultural, or functional adaptation of a particular phrase or structure in the translation process (Newmark, 1988). As shown in the studies of Xun (2021) and Li (2017), ideological pragmatism in Singaporean translation practice helps convey a specific interpretation to readers. The works of Phua (2020) and Gui (2019) confirm that translation responds to cultural and political changes. The results of semantic shifts align with the classification of Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995): while expansion and modulation enhanced the emotional impact, reduction sometimes led to a loss of meaning. According to the theories of Salomov (2020) and Catford (1965), these shifts demonstrate the translator's cultural sensitivity, but in problematic examples (e.g., "controlled leadership"), political neutrality can be compromised. This could hinder a full understanding of the Singaporean model in the Uzbek context. Overall, the strategies ensured the text was understandable, but a one-sidedly positive adaptation could limit the analysis. A more detailed discussion of this is provided below.

Going it Alone — Yolg'iz bosib o'tilgan yo'l

"...I have not seen a book ...how to make a living for its people when its former economic role as the entrepot of the region is becoming defunct. .. aholi ro'zg'orni qanday ta'minlash borasida biror tayinli kitobga duch kelmaganman..." Or: "We faced tremendous odds with an improbable chance of survival. — Omon qolish uchun qo'limizda aqlbovar qilmas darajada kam imkoniyat bor edi." Through these phrases, the translator attempts to emotionally intensify, create dramatic effect, and evoke the reader's empathy. The phrase "aqlbovar qilmas darajada" (unbelievably) is a clear example of stylistic adaptation.

Indonesia From Foe to Friend — Indoneziya: adovatdan do'stlikka

"They no longer harbored suspicions of "smuggling" to Singapore...we could not be blamed. — Ular endi Singapurni kontrabandada gumon qilishmadi... bunda bizni ayblay olishmasdi..." Here, the diplomatic speech is simplified, but the connotations are largely preserved. The translator expresses the delicate line between accusation and vindication with pragmatic caution.

Britain Pulls Out — Buyuk Britaniyaning ketishi

"... the principal role of Singapore's defense forces should be the prevention of a coup from within or from the outside... — Singapur qurolli kuchlarining asosiy vazifasi... davlat to'ntarishining oldini olishga qaratilishi kerak..." In this phrase, the political concept of "coup" is directly translated as "davlat to'ntarishi," showing the translator's intention to preserve the ideological weight. At the same time, the dramatic tone of the text is enhanced through emotional phrases like "umid berdi" (gave hope) and "ishonchimni mustahkamladi" (strengthened my faith).

On Corruption and Economic Crimes — Korrupsiya va iqtisodiy jinoyatlar borasidagi jumalar

"Singapore had to maintain an honest and efficient government and civil service. We had to be alert to any sign of corruption and act firmly against it." – (Singapur halol va samarali hukumat hamda davlat xizmatini saqlashi kerak edi. Biz har qanday korrupsiya alomatiga sergak bo'lishimiz va unga qat'iy chora ko'rishimiz kerak edi.) This sentence is clear evidence of a policy of political honesty, a firm stance against corruption, and an inevitable cleansing within the government. The modality ("had to") expresses the government's obligation to maintain honesty. "Act firmly against it" indicates that decisive and inevitable measures were taken against corruption. It elevated honesty in power from a mere political slogan to a systemic decision. "I was determined from the day we took office in 1959 to

stamp out corruption, whether in high or low places, and I was prepared to pay the political price if necessary." This sentence shows the author's personal political will. The phrase "stamp out corruption" conveys the intention to eradicate corruption at its roots. Especially "prepared to pay the political price" indicates that Lee Kuan Yew would not back down from this decision, even at the cost of his reputation. From a linguo-political perspective, this is a strong demonstration of legitimacy and ethical leadership. "We had to show that our government was not like others in the region, where corruption was a way of life." Through this quote, Lee Kuan Yew emphasizes that his government was based on honesty, unlike the political culture of others in the region. The word "show" indicates the necessity of real, practical actions rather than just a political image. This is crucial for restoring trust between the state and society.

CONCLUSION

The study findings indicate that the Uzbek translation of Lee Kuan Yew's work has adapted the political-historical text through pragmatic adaptation and semantic shifts. According to the results and discussion, semantic shifts (expansion, reduction, modulation) ensured the naturalness of the text, but in some cases, a loss of meaning was observed. Pragmatic adaptation was effective in conveying the text to the Uzbek reader, but further adaptation is required for politically sensitive terms. These results confirm the role of a pragmatic approach in the translation of political texts and provide a basis for future research.

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